United Nations A/AC.183/SR.248

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 December 2000

Original: English

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 248th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 12 November 1999, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Farhadi (Vice-Chairman). . . . . (Afghanistan)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly

Consideration of draft resolutions on the question of Palestine

Other matters

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

00-79935 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Ka (Senegal), Mr. Farhadi, Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

2. **The Chairman**, reporting on activities carried out since the previous meeting, said that the Bureau had met with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs to discuss the Committee's programme of work. A group of young Palestinian broadcasters had been briefed on the Committee's mandate and activities. The Bureau had also continued its consultations with members of the European Union. General Assembly resolution 54/22 of 10 November testified to the full support of all Member States for the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority.

Draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/1999/CRP.2)

3. **Mr. Balzan** (Malta), Rapporteur, said that the 1999 report reflected the current year's developments in the peace process. The Chairman's letter of transmittal drew attention to the Committee's concerns at a crucial point in the history of the Palestinian people. Chapter I contained the introduction and an outline of the Committee's objectives and perspectives. Chapters II and III summarized the respective mandates of the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information, and provided information on the organization of the Committee's work. Chapter IV contained a review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and enumerated encouraging developments in the peace process. It referred in particular to the further Israeli redeployment from parts of the West Bank, the resumption of the permanent status negotiations, the release of Palestinian prisoners, the safe passage routes, and the timetable for the conclusion of a framework agreement and a final settlement agreement.

4. The Committee had noted the convening, on 15 July 1999, of the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on Measures to Enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the statement adopted at its conclusion. Chapter IV also dealt, inter alia, with the serious problem posed by the continued settlement activity of the Government of Israel. Little had changed in that regard since the previous year. Information was also provided on: settler activities; the situation with regard to the Palestinian prisoners; the Palestinian economy; water resources available to the Palestinians; action by the donor community; action by the United Nations system, including the recent appointment of Mr. Rød-Larsen as United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian Authority; and the activities and budget constraints of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

5. Section A of chapter V described action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/39, while section B contained an account of action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 53/39 and 53/40. Paragraphs 60 to 63 gave an account of the Committee's cooperation with non-governmental organizations, and section C reflected action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/27, entitled "Bethlehem 2000".

6. Chapter VI contained information on the action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/41, while chapter VII contained the Committee's conclusions and recommendations. The Secretariat would continue to update the draft report as necessary, in consultation with the Rapporteur, in order to reflect further major developments.

7. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to consider the draft report chapter by chapter, rather than section by section, since the text had already been thoroughly discussed by the Bureau.

8. *It was so decided.*

9. *Chapters I to VII were adopted.*

10. *The draft report, as a whole, was adopted subject to updating by the Secretariat.*

Consideration of draft resolutions on the question of Palestine

Draft resolutions A, B, C and D

11. **The Chairman** said that draft resolutions A and B, covering the programme of work of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, respectively, draft resolution C on the Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information, and draft resolution D, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", had been approved by the Bureau and updated to reflect recent developments in the peace process.

12. In draft resolution A, the third preambular paragraph had been updated through the addition of the words "and the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum of 4 September 1999", while paragraph 2 read: "Considers that the Committee can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the *Middle East peace process and the full implementation of the agreements reached, as well as* to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period." Only minor changes had been made to draft resolution B.

13. In the fourth preambular paragraph of draft resolution C, the words "worldwide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information remains" had been inserted after the words "Convinced that the". The fifth preambular paragraph had been updated to include a reference to the Sharm-el-Sheikh Memorandum, while the words "aiming in particular at sensitizing public opinion on the question of Palestine" had been added at the end of paragraph 3 (e). A new paragraph 4 had been added: "*Requests* the Department to promote the Bethlehem 2000 Project, within existing resources and until the Bethlehem 2000 commemoration comes to a close, including the preparation and dissemination of publications, audiovisual material, and the establishment of a 'Bethlehem 2000' site on the United Nations Internet Home Page."

14. In draft resolution D, a new preambular paragraph had been added after the fourth preambular paragraph reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine. New preambular paragraphs referring to the Sharm-el-Sheikh Memorandum and the appointment of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and Palestinian Authority had been added after the thirteenth preambular paragraph. In the penultimate preambular paragraph, a reference to the meeting of donor countries in Tokyo on 14 October 1999 had been added. The final preambular paragraph now contained a reference to the Sharm-el-Sheikh Memorandum and the wording "the conclusion of the final settlement by September 2000, but not later than September of that year".

15. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) said that as a result of broad consultations, it had been agreed that, in the fourth preambular paragraph of draft resolution C, the words "and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions" should be inserted after the word "information", as in the previous year's resolution on the same subject.

16. In draft resolution D, the fifth preambular paragraph should also be reformulated using more traditional language to read: "*Reaffirming* the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is solved in all its aspects." In the twelfth preambular paragraph, he said that the words "beginning of the" should be replaced with the word "subsequent", the word "redeployment" should be pluralized, and the words "in 1996" should be deleted. In the last preambular paragraph, the words "the agreed time of" should be inserted before the words "September 2000" and the words "but not later than September of that year" should be deleted. In paragraph 3, the words "takes note with satisfaction of" should be inserted before the words "the commencement of the negotiations". It was to be hoped that the draft resolutions would enjoy the usual overwhelming support in the General Assembly.

17. *Draft resolutions A, B, C and D, as revised, were adopted.*

Other matters

18. **The Chairman** announced that the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would be commemorated on 29 November 1999.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.